The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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Notes of the Month.

TO all our readers, writers, workers, well-wishers, and friends we extend heartiest greetings and every good wish for the New Year. May the year that has now dawned be for them, and for everybody, a time of peace and prosperity, a time of industry, a time of growth in the things of the spirit, and especially a time in which all men shall strive to deserve the assured blessing of Almighty God.

* * *

And to our good wishes we add our sincere thanks to all those who have co-operated with us in our work during the year that has gone. That the magazine has increased in circulation will be pleasant news to many, and we trust that such increase may mean increased usefulness to our Church. For this success we are indebted largely to those members of the churches who see to the distribution of the magazine among their people, and we would express the hope that their efforts in the future may be crowned with a success at least equal to that of the past. And as we are thankful for distribution, so also are we thankful for production. Gratefully we make mention of the fact that during the past year, as in preceding years, many able writers have contributed to the columns of our magazine, thus enabling us to place before our readers the ripe judgments and opinions of experts and scholars. This work has always been freely given; we recognise the value of it, and trust that we may receive the same efficient help in the future as we have always received in the past.

* * *

Early in the New Year the formation of a Sustentation Fund for the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland will be brought under the notice of our readers. The reorganisation of the Church which leads up to the establishment of such a fund has taken much time, but that time has been well spent in bringing about a spirit of hearty co-operation which could have hardly been attained had the matter been pushed on more hastily and without due consideration for the feelings of everyone concerned. Now that the consolidation of our forces is an accomplished fact the time has arrived for us to get up a sub-

stantial endowment which will form a permanent link between our congregations and enable them to continue their good work with hope and confidence. The successful launching of the fund will entail liberal support from our wealthy and generous people. With them the success of the initial effort lies. We can count upon them to give a generous response to the first appeal. The kind assistance of those who are not able to give large sums is no less necessary. The cause is one which deserves the help of rich and poor alike. The " widow's mite " is of as much importance as the rich man's donation. Let there be no holding back. The issue at stake is an important one, far more important than some of us yet realise. We are engaged in a great work which will have not only a very potent influence on our Church in the immediate future, but will have an immense power for good among generations yet unborn. We are the progressive party in Irish Christianity. A great trust has been placed in our keeping Let us, one and all, do our best to fulfil the duty which has been laid upon us. Every member of our Church is an instrument of Divine Providence. To be in the forefront of progressive Protestantism is a privilege of which we ought to be, and are, justly proud. At no time in Ireland has our work ever been so necessary. The whole tendency in religious affairs is to allow a stagnant and half-dead religious formality to kill the living spirit of Christ. In Protestantism, as well as in Catholicism, to acquiesce in the creed is regarded as of more importance than to live the life. Nothing could be further from the purpose of our Master. Nothing could be more hostile to the will of God. By our united efforts, no less than by our individual example, it is incumbent on us all to try to improve this state of matters. Evolution in religion must and will proceed in spite of all attempts of ecclesiastics to check it. We have it in our power to do a little to help to uplift the human race. The advance must be slow. Obstacles and difficulties must be overcome. Movements, apparently in a backward direction, will temporarily take place. These are but apparent, or for a time. In the end Christ's ideal will be realised. The character and conduct of men must gradually improve. The Kingdom of God upon earth will ultimately be an accomplished fact. Our Church has been chosen to take a part in the production of that grand result. Let not one of us, rich or poor, fail to endeavour with heart and soul to promote it. Let us play the part assigned to us manfully and trustingly. At the present moment a hearty and generous response to the call of the Church for aid is a duty which we owe to the Almighty; to His Son and our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ; to the world; and to ourselves.

* * *

During the past month the North of Ireland has been deeply moved by the fate which has overtaken a poor and defenceless woman. She had been married in a Presbyterian Church by a minister of her own faith to a Catholic. For a time all went well. Soon, however, discord was fomented in the home, the sacred name of the Christian religion being used to stir up strife. The husband deserted and disowned the creature whose whole life and happiness had been entrusted by his Maker to his care. To still further aggravate his sin he tore her infants from her arms and placed them both in the hands of strangers in some secret place to which the heart-broken mother had no access. All this he did contrary to the law of the land under which he was legally married, contrary to the instincts of humanity, contrary to the spirit of Christ's teaching, contrary to the will of the Almighty God " in whom he lives and moves and has his being," and did in accordance with a decree of the Church to which he belonged. Actuated by the belief that an ecclesiastical organisation could have an influence for good or evil over the eternal future of his immortal soul, he acted the part of a mean and cowardly wretch, utterly devoid of the milk of human kindness, less noble than the beasts of the field. We, standing detached from all who think that creed or

confession, priest or parson, can absolve us from the consequences of our wilful misdeeds when we stand at the judgment seat of God, are horrified that such things can be done in the name of Christianity. Our sympathies are with the deserted wife and bereaved mother. We feel for her the more because we know that her life has been permanently blighted and that nothing can restore to her the peace and confidence she has lost. We can only pray that Divine aid will be given her to bear the blow. We say nothing against any man's religious belief, but we do maintain that the whole essence of Christianity is contained in the words "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," and we proclaim that duty to the men and women around us is of more importance than belief in creed; and that obedience to the heavenly dictates of conscience is more Christian than subservience to the decrees of any Church, be it Catholic or Protestant. We deeply deplore that in Protestant as well as in Catholic churches belief in dogma has come to be more sought after than belief in the necessity for obedience to the commandments which Christ himself has laid down for our guidance in the practical affairs of life. While this and kindred acts are possible within the pale of any Church calling itself by our Master's name, we, individually, and as a Church, must continue to protest and to strive to win men to a saner and more filial attitude towards 'Our Father which art in heaven,' and to a more perfect understanding of the message he has revealed to us in the life and teaching of His Son, Jesus Christ.

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THE JESUS OF HISTORY.

An English translation has just appeared of a book by Prof. A. Drews, of Carlsruhe, entitled, " The Christ Myth" published originally in German some months ago. The book calls into question the historicity of Jesus and has aroused a good deal of interest in both Germany and England. With regard to this question the following portion of an article which appeared in the *Inquirer* on 26th February last, by Prof. Carpenter of Oxford, may be of interest to our readers.

. . . . . But when the frame is shattered by the procession of the centuries as mankind goes marching on, does the picture perish ? Look over the wide and varied landscape which it presents. There is the familiar lake with its girdle of hills. There is the belt of shining towns upon the shore, or the village perched upon the heights. There are the boats where the fishermen ply their busy trade ; there are the fields where the sower scatters the grain, or the reapers sort out the tares. There are the vineyards where the householder plants his hedge and digs his wine-press. There are the slopes gemmed with the red anemones that surpassed Solomon in glory, and the far-stretching pastures reaching over the mountains where the shepherd searches for the wandering sheep. The raven sails out from his home among the crags. Over the Eastern hills the dawn comes up angrily, and the torn and twisted clouds look fiery red. The storm descends in fury flooding the water-courses in the ravines and lashing the lake into foam. The ill-built house falls into ruin, and the boats strain and labour among the waves. Enter the peasant's home, and you will find the house-mother kneading the dough, or sweeping the floor for a lost coin, or patching an old garment. At the corn chandler's you will see the good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over. Pass to the wineshop, and note how the wine-seller must put new wine into new skins. Go into the carpenter's or the builder's yard, and note the difference between the green wood and the dry, or the splinter and the beam, or watch the lengthening by a cubit which no man can perform on his own person. Visit the bazaars where rich stuffs are displayed for the dresses of courtiers, or the travelled merchant sells his precious pearls. Watch the games of the chil-

dren in the market-square, the wedding and the funeral; or see the labourers standing idly in the shade till the owner of a vineyard comes along and offers them a job. Here is the very stuff of which the gospel is made. This is no mythology or cult-formula, no maxims of moralists, no pedantry of the schools, no academic discussion, no formal lecture from the desk. Saying after saying is minted in the open air. It is speech coined in the sunlight, full of the echoes of the waves lapping on the shore or the winds blowing from the hills. A psalmist might have said, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." A Rabbi or a Chinese sage might have enjoined, "Do not to another what you would not that he should do to you." A Greek moralist might teach that a wise man was a son of God. A Hindu seer might lay down the principle of overcoming evil by good as the prime rule of life. But where in so brief a compass will you find so much which the experience of the world has recognised as the highest? Here is the concentration into a few pages of that which is elsewhere found after long search through climes and generations. Here is everywhere the impress of a great creative personality who can make the homeliest symbols, the simplest imaginative forms, instinct with the wisdom of life. Its scattered aspects are brought into relation to one principle, that fellowship of the child with its father which no outward sacrament can effect, and no inward sin can permanently impair or destroy. And when it is affirmed that the Apostle Paul knew nothing of this teaching, and therefore the Jesus about whom there was a tradition forty years later counts for nothing, it must be remembered that within a very few years of his death Paul talked with his brother in Jerusalem. Let any one read a page of Jewish morality, such as is embodied in the book of Ecclesiasticus—good, homely, proverbial teaching—"bourgeois morality," as Renan called it (did he not sometimes rate it too low?), and then pass to Paul's psalm of love, and ask himself how he will explain the difference of tone; does it count for nothing that a new impulse has entered Jewish life and thought, and is not its historic source to be found in that Christian community into whose fellowship Paul had been so strangely brought. It was with the Gospels in its hands that the Church conquered the Empire. A Christus-cult divorced from its base in a real person could no more have held the allegiance of the Roman world than did the parallel devotion to Mithra which spread all the way to our own Tyneside. Mithraism failed because no *Imitatio Mithrae* was possible. Christianity triumphed because it held up the figure of Jesus to all men's reverence and aspiration. The essence of the Gospel may be different to us from that which seemed most significant to Jesus himself in the midst of the hopes of his own day. Time has sifted out its transient elements; it has enlarged its perspectives; it has changed its emphasis and brought its hidden treasures to light. Be it that its real value to us is not where Jesus placed it among his contemporaries. That does not alter its inner worth, for that is attested by the whole subsequent experience which it has both shaped and sustained, and that lies in the view of God and man which he set at the heart of his expectation of the kingdom. It lies in that sense of union between our nature and the divine which enabled him to summon the sinner to the highest possible achievement, sure of a response to his call. It lies, that is to say, in what a modern interpreter, the late Master of Balliol, has called the idealism of Jesus.

And so we come back to that dinner in the tax-gatherer's house, to that love of man which "could not be exhausted by any wrong that man could do," but only loved the more that the evil might be vanquished and the good secured. For the Gospel means that the drunkard and the dissolute, the idle and the reckless, the despairing, the defiant, are all alike the children of God's providence, have a share in His purpose, and are challenged by Jesus with a courage and confidence which the world will yet justify in unspeakable thankfulness and

humble love—to be perfect, even as the Father in heaven is perfect. And therefore we still pray the prayer of Jesus, though it be with new meanings and a wider scope,

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done
On earth, as it is in heaven."

THE DISSENTERS CHAPELS' BILL, 1844.

By Rev. James Kennedy.

III.

LADY HEWLEY, by deeds dated 1704, 1707, and 1709, conveyed to trustees immense properties in Yorkshire, the revenues of which she directed to be applied, First, in favour of "poor and godly preachers of Christ's Holy Gospel;" Secondly, of "poor and godly widows for the time being" of such preachers; Thirdly, "to encourage and promote the preaching in poor places of Christ's Holy Gospel." Some was to be used to found not more than five exhibitions to aid young men in their education for the ministry, and some also to maintain an almshouse, &c., for the relief of godly persons in distress. These benefactions were to be confined to Yorkshire and the Northern counties generally. Undoubtedly, Lady Hewley's opinions were of a narrow type of so-called Evangelicalism, and so were those of her Trustees, but in process of time the Trust came to be administered by men who were for the most part Unitarians, by some who, though descended from "outed" ministers of 1662, oscillated in their loyalty between the established Church and the Unitarian Chapel. But the Trust was administered with impartiality so that of 238 ministers receiving aid at the time the lawsuit was commenced, 172 were Trinitarians and 66 Unitarians. But the foundress was decidedly Trinitarian, the Trusts had been created before Unitarianism was tolerated; and after litigation extending over 12 years and costing about £30,000, the Trustees were dispossessed of office and it was held first in the law courts and afterwards in the House of Lords that no endowment made before 1813 could be applied to any Unitarian purpose whatever. The effect of this decision was to deprive Unitarians of all interest in the Hewley Fund. and also of all the property inherited by them from their forefathers, and all accretions, unless where the contrary was expressly stipulated, made even by themselves. With regard to our Irish Meeting Houses it is important to bear in mind that the early Scotch settlers in the North worshipped in the Parish Churches, whence the Episcopal incumbents had fled or been banished during the time of the Rebellion in the 17th century and afterwards during the Commonwealth. Their ministers, such as Brice of Ballycarry, and Dunbar of Larne can hardly be considered Presbyterian ministers. They were ordained by Bishops in Scotland, but were more inclined to Presbyterian ways than the Bishops liked. Hence their speedy removal. A little later ministers were inducted by a sort of hybrid ceremony, the Bishop of the Diocese joining as a simple Presbyter with such local ministers as might be available and the passages in the Service Book to which the candidate objected, being carefully lined out. And so ministers thus ordained or installed officiated in their respective Parish Churches and enjoyed the usual tithes and emoluments, and where the total did not amount to at least £100 per annum, the balance under Cromwell's *regime* was made up by grants from the Treasury of Tithes.

But when the Restoration came and the merrie monarch, Charles II., sat on the throne of his fathers, Presbyterians fared badly. The Bishops could not do away with Presbyterianism in the churches proclaimed by Presbyterian ministers. The ministers were called upon at once to conform to the Form and Order of the Established Church or leave their benefices and as this Form and Order had not been abolished by law in Ireland as had been done in England and Scotland, prelacy, *i.e.*, Government by Bishops, not by

Presbytery, was still the law of the land, every other form of worship, &c., being forbidden and illegal. But to their honour the Presbyterian ministers preferred conscience and loss to emolument and gain. They would not conform, in fact they lost no opportunity of fulminating in terms only to be understood by the spirit of the age against Prelacy as the twin-sister of Popery, the mother of all abominations. And so almost immediately their pulpits were declared vacant by the Bishops, and they with their wives and children turned out upon the world—only some six or seven preferring mammon to conscience.

These evictions took place in 1661, not in 1662, as by a very unfortunate confusion of thought was stated in the November number. In a few years the severity of the authorities relaxing. Meeting-houses began to be built and endowed by loving members and finally *Regium Donum* was granted by King William III. Intensely orthodox at first yet by natural evolution especially when the Bible was regarded as the sole Rule of Faith and Practice, many ministers and congregations advanced in the direction of Unitarianism. Hence the formation of the Antrim Presbytery in 1725 and the Remonstrant Synod in 1829 as well as the Synod of Munster composed of congregations whose members were mostly descendants of English Puritans. But as till 1817 their faith was illegal their church property was also imperilled till the Dissenters Chapels' Bill was passed.

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For the Children.

THE NEW LEAF.

By A Sunday School Teacher.

Illustrated by Miss Praeger.

Dear-Child was *not* asleep at exactly five minutes to twelve o'clock at night, on the 31st December, 1910.

And the proof of that is, that he-or-she *had* been asleep, and had been wakened by a light that was brighter and warmer than moonlight, and was sitting bolt upright in his-or-her very own little bed, and looking round his-or-her own little room to see Who had just said:

"Dear-Child, I've come to say good-bye."

"But if you please," said Dear-Child, "I can't see you." It had been a friendly, comfortable kind of voice, and Dear-Child was not a bit frightened. He-or-she just made a shawl of his-or-her dressing gown—you know the way—and sat wrapped-up and waiting, wondering a little whether Santa Claus could possibly have come back too soon.

"I don't expect you can see me," said the voice. "I'm the Old Year, and there's very little of me left just now. But I want you to listen to all the sounds that are here with me, and I'll explain any you don't understand."

Well, Dear-Child listened, and the first thing he-or-she heard was a burst of merry laughter, and then a bad-tempered little cry, and one very sad little sob.

"You haven't had a bad year at all, that way," said the kind voice. "What you hear now is how much you laughed yourself, or made other people laugh, in my time. And how much you cried yourself, or made other people cry."

The next sound was exactly like wood-chopping, rather feeble little chops, with pauses between them, but now and then a good firm blow.

"Whatever is that?" asked Dear-Child.

And the answer came. "That is all the work you did at school, chopping away at the Tree of Learning. Not just too energetic all the time, were you?"

Dear-Child felt sure that one good crisp tap was meant for the week when mother had been ill, and he-or-she had taken home top marks in class to cheer her up.

Now there was something being set down on the floor with a tremendous thud, and after that came a soft little plop. "The sack filled with all the happiness you've had in my time," said

Telling mother all about the two Years.

Old Year, " and the other with all the unhappiness. You've been very lucky, Dear-Child."

The next sound was just a step ; one little footstep that went stump-stump round the room. Those were all the steps that Dear-Child had taken forward in the year, and behind them came limping the steps that he-or-she had taken back. The kind voice said nothing about the numbers, for there were nearly as many of one kind as of the other. But Dear-Child thought there were a few more forward than back, and hoped tnat he-or-she had counted them right.

"Now listen very carefully," said Old Year.

This next noise was a very slight one. You would hear just the same if you stood under a tree in summer and listened for a whisper of wind through all the green branches.

" Those are the New Leaves," said Old Year, " that you turned over when I was new myself, and that you kept."

Well, Dear-Child knew, of course, what " turning over a New Leaf" meant, and I suppose so do you. And as he-or-she listened to the pleasant little rustling sound, he-or-she was inclined to be rather pleased with his-or-her self until the next sound came. For that was very much louder. It was the rustle that you hear on a windy day in autumn, when a whole carpet of dead leaves is being swept along the ground.

And there was the kind voice saying : " Dear-Child, these are the New Leaves you turned over too when I was New, and that you didn't keep."

Then what do you suppose the next sound was ? Dear-Child's very own cuckoo-clock on the stairs was striking twelve.

" Good-bye, Dear-Child," said the kind voice softly, " That's all there's time for you to hear. Don't treat any year worse than you treated me. Good-bye."

And almost immediately Dear-Child saw—not only heard, this time, but actually saw—the New Year standing in his-or-her doorway, a very large white person, who smiled at Dear-Child and then spoke.

" Want any Leaves ? " said New Year.

" Thank you," said Dear-Child, getting rather red. " I—I think I won't this time, at least, not so many."

" Perhaps you'd rather have some Chances ? " asked New Year eagerly.

I can keep sending them to you--Chances to-be-kind, Chances-to-be-brave, Chances - to - be - true, Chances-to-be-nice. All kinds of Chances-to-be. And then Chances-not-to-be-mean, Chances-not-to-be-naughty--all kinds of Chances-not-to-be. I have to send them, you see, and you would have to use them. Will you, Dear-Child ? "

" Well," said wise little Dear-Child, " I can try."

And that was the only New Year promise that he-or-she made. For at once the room was in darkness again, and Dear-Child wriggled down under the clothes and promptly went to sleep.

That was how mother found him-or-her rolled up in a dressing-gown next morning. And Dear-Child used the first Chance by telling Mother all about the two Years and the promise he-or-she had made. And Mother made the very same promise for herself as well so between them both I think they will manage to keep it.

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"NEARER MY GOD TO THEE."

ON the 2nd of December last, there was sold at a well-known Auction Mart in London, the original manuscript copy of the above-mentioned hymn. The price realised for it was £32 10s. 0d. What a large sum for a bit of paper containing only five verses of poetry, but it was poetry of a Divine nature. It was not the author's personality, as in many cases, that rendered the manuscript so valuable, but the associations connected with the hymn it contained. The author of it was indeed little known beyond a select literary circle, but where she was known she was esteemed most highly for the pure moral tone and beauty of her character " Nearer my God to Thee," appeals to people in all stations and conditions of life, and to all shades of religious thought. It has cheered and inspired the strong with joyous thoughts of God, and the glory of his Fatherhood ; and indeed it has equally cheered and inspired the weary, sick, and dying, with courage and immortal hope. In the sanctuary, the street, on the lonely journey, in the darkness of the night, on the sea, yea, wherever men and women wend their way, or find themselves, there, this hymn has cheered, inspired, comforted, and blessed. Would that the writer could realise the more than golden treasure she bestowed upon her fellow-creatures when she conferred upon them this priceless gem.

An American Professor and several fellow-pilgrims were once travelling in an Eastern desert place, when strains of vocal music were heard in the distance. Presently, a number of men were seen approaching them, and singing as they came. When near enough, they realised that it was " Nearer My God to Thee." that was being sung by a troop of Bedouin Arabs as they tramped along. The effect was most touching upon the Americans. A traveller heard this hymn sung by a number of Arab boys in a school at Jaffa, and again by a number of girls in a school at Nazareth, while many wanderers from Christian countries make their way to Bethel, ten miles north of Jerusalem, where Jacob dreamed his wonderful dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, for the sake of singing the hymn on the spot, for it was this recorded incident that inspired the germ-thought of the verses. At the last Sunday evening service held in Queen Victoria's drawing-room before her death, this hymn was sung, for it was a favourite with her, and it was " the best " known to her son, the late King Edward VII. As the lamented President M'Kinley lay in the presence of death, listeners at his bedside heard him breathe out with almost his last breath —" Nearer My God to Thee, nearer to Thee." Its words have been on the lips of many in their departing moments.

" Nearer My God to Thee " is found in nearly all the hymn books of Christendom. It is probably the best known, and most appreciated hymn in the Christian church. It was, however, once refused admission to a hymn book, not because of the sentiments it contains, but because its author was a

Unitarian, and because it first appeared in a Unitarian hymn book. It has been tinkered to bring it into orthodox shape but the workmanship was bad, and so has not survived. Such is the belittling influence of narrowness and bigotry. Mrs. Adams wrote "Nearer My God to Thee" when she was thirty-five years of age, at a time when she experienced much suffering, and died eight years afterwards, long before it had attained the position it now holds in the Christian world. Would that the gifted writer could realise in her spiritual state the preciousness of the legacy she left the world when she endowed it with this soul-stirring composition!

Mrs. Adams, whose maiden name was Sarah Flower, was born at Harlow, in Essex, in 1805, and died in 1848. She had a musical sister, Eliza, who composed tunes to Sarah's hymns. She died two years before Sarah. Their father, Benjamin Flower, was a man of considerable ability and strength of character, who suffered imprisonment for his political opinions, and was for a long time editor of a Cambridge newspaper.

Fragile, sensitive, delicate, as indicated by her large, liquid, widely separated eyes, Mrs. Adams was nevertheless of a bright and cheery disposition. Her husband, William Bridges Adams, she first met at the home of the lady who afterwards became Mrs. John Stuart Mill. She was a contributor to *The Monthly Repository*, a magazine which circulated mainly among Unitarians, and had as co-contributors Leigh Hunt, Robert Browning, J. S. Mill, R. A. Horne, Harriet Martineau, and W. J. Fox, the editor.

We cannot be too deeply thankful for this noble composition—"Nearer My God to Thee," which will live to inspire and bless millions yet unborn. We need not, therefore, be greatly surprised that the sum of £32 10s. 0d. was lately paid for the original manuscript of it.

W. S. Smith.

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Work, good hard work, nothing can keep the devil out so well.

EUSTACE STREET, DUBLIN.

Rev. James Martineau's First Pulpit.

1828.

Mar. 16—Resolved: "That Mr. James Martineau be invited on trial."
April 3—Arrived in Dublin.
" 4—(Good Friday). Introduced Morning Service.
" 6—Preached Morning and Afternoon.
" 13—Preached Morning and Afternoon.
May 18—"The Rev. James Martineau was declared to be elected Assistant Minister."
July 13—Congregation ratified the election.
Sept. 29—Preached his first Sermon as Assistant Minister.
Oct. 26—Ordained by the Synod of Munster.

1831.

Oct. 30—Read, after Morning Service, "a communication on a subject of general importance to the Congregation."
Nov. 13—Resolved: "That Mr. Martineau's resignation be accepted."

Mr. Martineau's attitude towards the Regium Donum as an exclusive appropriation of a fund which ought to have been general, has been so fully dealt with by the Rev. James Drummond, M.A., LL.D., in the "Life and Letters of James Martineau," that nothing further requires to be said on that point. But the following letter may be of interest as showing the friendly relationship existing at the time between the Minister and Congregation.

11th December, 1831.

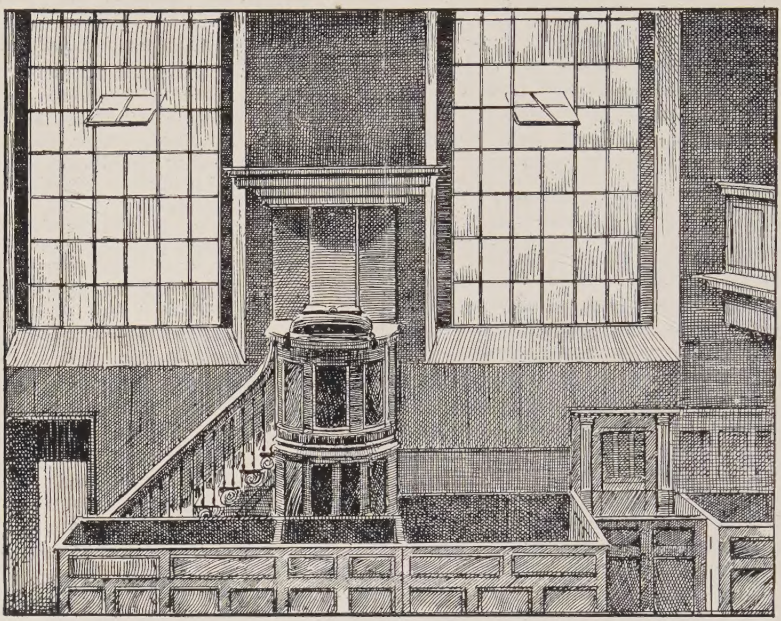
To the Rev. James Martineau.

Sir,

We, the Members of the Congregation with whom you have been recently connected desire to convey to you the expression of our sincere regret that circumstances should have arisen to render your permanent connexion with us inexpedient, being fully sensible that by your removal we have lost an able, upright and zealous Minister.

During the three years in which we enjoyed the advantage of your services, we ever found you active in the pursuit of truth, and fearless in the avowal of it; solicitous to instruct and edify rather than to please; and resolved with singleness of purpose and unswerving fidelity to your Great Master to teach and inculcate what you believed to be His Will. For the honest discharge of your Ministerial duties we must believe that you are enjoying the good man's best reward—an approving conscience. Man's approbation is of little moment. Yet we trust you will not receive with indifference this assurance of our cordial esteem and respect.

The opinions which you advocate in your communication to us of the 30th October last are not generally entertained by us, and we have considered that it would not conduce



EUSTACE STREET, DUBLIN.

REV. JAMES MARTINEAU'S FIRST PULPIT.

to the Religious interests of our society, that upon questions of so much importance a diversity of sentiment should exist between a Minister and a large proportion of his People. In regard to the principles which you have embraced we deem it but justice to express our full conviction that in acting as you have done you have been actuated solely by a conscientious sense of duty.

Permit us to hope that you may find it convenient to assist the Rev. Mr. Hutton in the discharge of his Ministerial duties until the month of June next. For your past services accept our grateful acknowledgments and remain assured of our continued esteem and regard.

Signed on behalf of the Congregation.

REPORTS

Belfast: First Church.—A very successful social evening was held in the Central Hall, on November 30th. There was a large attendance of members and friends of the congregation and they entered with zest and apparent pleasure into the programme arranged by the Social Evenings' Committee. The first part consisted of progressive games which had been selected for their variety and interest. Nearly a hundred and fifty persons gathered round the tables and the hall presented a gay and animated appearance. Prizes were given at the conclusion of the games to the lady and gentleman who had been most successful, the former being Miss M. M'Clelland, and the latter Mr. Robert Martin. Refreshments followed and then a musical programme, consisting of pianoforte solos by Mr. J. T. Thompson, and songs by Miss Capper and Mr. Charles M Anally, brought to an end an enjoyable and truly sociable function.

As has been the custom for several years, the evening of the Sunday before Christmas (Dec. 18) was given up to a musical Service, Under the painstaking care of Mr. J. T. Thompson a largely augmented choir rendered in admirable manner some of the best known choruses in Handel's Oratorio, "The Messiah." The solos were equally familiar and attractive and were entrusted to the professional members of the Church choir, Miss Blakely, Miss Gordon, Miss Morton, Mr. J. Laird, Mr. Waugh and Mr. Conkey. The solos were likewise splendidly rendered, and as a result the whole musical service gave great pleasure to the very large congregation present. In point of attendance the service surpassed any hitherto held on the same occasion, a fact which should give great satisfaction not only to the organist and ordinary choir, but also to the kind musical friends whose services were so willingly and effectively given.

Holywood.—On Tuesday evening, Dec.

13th, the Annual Meeting of the congregation was held in the Schoolroom of the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church. Unfortunately the weather was against there being so good an attendance as usual, but there was a fair muster and those who were present spent a very pleasant evening. Tea was served from 7-30 to 8 o'clock, when the chair was taken by the Rev. G. L. Phelps. The annual Report and Statement of Accounts were passed on the motion of Mr. Omar C. Nelson, seconded by Mr. Richard Patterson. The re-appointment of the office-bearers, together with the appointment of three new members of committee, and a vote of thanks to the choir for their services during the year concluded the business part of the meeting. Mr. Phelps then gave an excellent address, and touched on various congregational matters as well as some of the work done by our Churches in past years, and he urged those present to throw more energy and enthusiasm into the maintenance of our principles. A very enjoyable programme was provided consisting of songs by Miss M'Cammon, Mr. Gordon May, and Mr. James Shannon ; a vocal duet by the Misses Neill ; two quartettes by Miss M'Cammon, Miss M. Neill, Mr. Harvey, and Mr. J. Shannon ; and a part song by the choir. Miss Praeger also gave an amusing reading which was much enjoyed as were all the other items. Votes of thanks and the singing of God Save the King concluded the proceedings.

Mountpottinger.—An interesting lecture on " Tolstoy " was delivered in the Schoolroom, on Tuesday, November 22nd, by the Rev. G. L. Phelps, of Holywood. Mr. Phelps gave a brief account of Tolstoy's life and spoke of his search for God. A discussion followed the lecture in which the Chairman (the Rev. J. Worthington), Messrs. E. R. Jackson, H. Thomas and D. Young took part.

On Tuesday, December 6th, a Lantern Lecture was given by Mr. E. R. Jackson in the Schoolroom entitled " From Grimy North to Sunny South." Mr. Jackson gave an interesting account of his holiday experience in the South of England and showed a number of slides of Eastbourne and environs. The lecture was followed with interest by a good audience.

In connection with the Theodore Parker Centenary a Lecture was recently given in the Schoolroom by Mr. J. H. Gilliland on " Theodore Parker as a Social Reformer." Mr. Gilliland said that this was perhaps not the best known side of Parker's work, but it was not the least important. They should never forget the noble stand Parker made for economic as well as moral religious freedom. A good discussion followed in which the chairman (Rev. J. Worthington), and Messrs. Forrest, A. Hanna, M. Rice and A. Larmour took part.

On recent Sunday evenings the Minister has given a course of sermons on the " Principles of Non-Subscription," which he declared were the Reformation principles of the Sufficiency of Scripture, the Right of Private Judgment and the Moral and Religious Authority of Christ. Their Church, he said, rested on the broad basis of Scripture (which meant religious experience at its highest level) as distinct from the dogmatic interpretation of Scripture embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith which formed the basis in theory at least of so-called orthodox Presbyterianism.

Newry.—On Tuesday evenings, November 29th and December 6th, a very interesting lantern lecture was given on the " Life Story of Edward VII." The lecture was in two parts—the first dealing with the late King's youth and the period when he was Prince of Wales, and the second part embraced the story of his illustrious reign as Sovereign of the vast British Empire. On both occasions there were large audiences, who followed the lectures very attentively. Mr. R. Rowland presided, and the lecturer was the Rev. G. J. Slipper. The lectures were illustrated by two fine series of slides by S. H. Benson Co., of London. The lantern was manipulated by Mr. M. Simpson with his usual care and skill, and fine pictures were thrown on the screen. The usual votes of thanks to lecturer, lanternist, and chairman were accorded, and the proceedings closed on each occasion by the audience singing the National Anthem.

Unity Guild.—The November meeting took the form of a lantern lecture at the Central Hall, by Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., on the 16th of that month. An improved attendance was noticed which is a gratifying feature. The lecture, which was entitled " International Impressions and Experiences" dealt with the lecturer's sojourn in Germany during last summer when he was in charge of a party of members of the Co-operative Holiday Movement who spent a fortnight in the Happy Fatherland, and also of the time of the International Conference at Berlin. Being no stranger to Germany the lecturer was enabled to interest and instruct his audience to a marked degree. Many fine slides of Berlin, Heidelberg, and other places of interest were placed on the screen, the lantern arrangements being as usual in the capable hands of of Mr. Geo. J. Hill. The January arrangements are as follows :—Annual Soiree in the Central Hall on the 18th, and Lantern Lecture on the 25th, at the same place by Rev. E. A. Voysey, M.A., whose subject will be " Cremation "

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